

1. Public Feedback for Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Confederate Memorials and Street Names

1. Please provide your feedback:

The Confederacy was part of the U.S. history and part of Virginia's history. The statues should not be taken down. The street names should not be changed.

Do not be "politically correct". People now and in the future can learn from history. You are trying to pretend that the Confederacy and the Civil War never existed. This would be as bad as pretending that the Holocaust never existed.

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Feb 08, 2016 17:47:34 Success: Email Sent to: craig.fifer@alexandriava.gov

1. Public Feedback for Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Confederate Memorials and Street Names

1. Please provide your feedback:

I support this effort.

I am opposed to any use of "Lost Cause" terminology or symbols in official Alexandria actions to justify the American Civil War and the rebels' part in it.

In addition to the measures you describe above, I find the plaque on the Hotel Monaco particularly egregious. Since it is on private property, the city should erect a kiosk or other informational plaque near the Hotel's plaque to tell a more balanced version of the killing of Capt Ellsworth.

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1. Public Feedback for Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Confederate Memorials and Street Names

1. Please provide your feedback:

I couldn't attend the meeting this evening, unfortunately, but at least want to provide feedback on this effort...100% against it. What's next, are you going to lobby to change the name of our nation's capital because George Washington was a slave-owner? Ridiculous.

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1. Public Feedback for Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Confederate Memorials and Street Names

1. Please provide your feedback:

As a proud alexandria resident I would highly recommend that this group leaves our confederate heritage as is. Alexandria has always been a leader in preserving its past in the face of change and has greatly benefitted from this philosophy. Let us continue this tradition into the future.

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1. Public Feedback for Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Confederate Memorials and Street Names

1. Please provide your feedback:

I appreciated hearing all the views presented at the Advisory Group public meeting last night. It was interesting to hear the variety of experiences and thoughts about the issues under study. It appeared that last night there are only two options; do nothing or change names, remove statue. So under that process some people will lose and some people will win regardless of which choice is taken. If there is hatred, if there is bias and racial prejudices in Alexandria I don't understand how changing street names and removing a statue will rectify that. Can't we find solutions that honor the confederates from Alexandria and also honor the American African community? Today I think Alexandria is a diverse and vibrant community and we should celebrate all our histories that allowed us to become who we are today.

Sylvia Winterling

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1. Public Feedback for Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Confederate Memorials and Street Names

1. Please provide your feedback:

I did not have the opportunity to attend the February 8th meeting. I watched the recorded video and I wanted to respond to two specific statements made by speakers at the meeting.

FIRST, it was repeated over and over again that renaming streets and relocating monuments is tantamount to "erasing history." I was even dismayed to hear members of the Ad Hoc Committee using the term "erasing history" since it is misleading and mischaracterizes intentions. The "erasing history" claim could not be more ludicrous, as there is a clear difference between: (1) choosing not to glorify Confederate leaders who committed high treason by initiating a violent rebellion to preserve and expand slavery, and (2) erasing those events from our collective memory.

No one has "erased" the impact of the Third Reich from history; it remains a staple of almost every school curriculum. Yet statues bearing the image of Hitler and the swastika were torn down in post-war Germany. Streets and plazas received new names. Would those same commentators condemn post-war Germans for "erasing history" by removing symbols of Nazism from the landscape of German cities? Similarly, the citizens of Budapest brought down Stalin's statue during Hungary's revolution of 1956. Was it "erasing history" when the Russian cities of Stalingrad and Leningrad were renamed?

Just because people living in a democracy choose not to maintain symbols of hatred and terror in their communities staring them in the face daily does not mean that they seek to erase these dark times from their collective memory. Neither did the University of Texas "erase history" last August when it pulled down a statute of Jefferson Davis from the center of its campus.

As president of the Confederacy, Davis issued a military decree in December 1862 allowing summary executions of captured black Union soldiers. That order set in motion a series of massacres of black soldiers captured on the battlefield. The Committee should, therefore, be able to appreciate why the name "Jefferson Davis Memorial Highway" patently offends so many.

It is not a solution to bury the problem for another 100 years. The Ad Hoc Committee should take action right now to ensure that names used on city property inclusively reflect the values of residents, tourists and visitors to Alexandria, and that they do not ostracize or offend.

SECOND, one speaker made the incendiary remark that those people who favor renaming streets and relocating monuments are "just like ISIS." Actually, the reverse is true - the Confederacy was just like ISIS. Both governments created political systems predicated on the enslavement of other human beings who belong to another ethnic group. Both governments justified slavery based on their respective religious convictions. The Confederates used Christianity to justify slavery and ISIS says that slavery is permitted under Islam. Like ISIS, the southern slave society has practiced public beheadings and lynchings of African Americans for many decades throughout our history. ISIS sadistically burned alive a captured Jordanian fighter pilot. The burning incident was filmed and posted online by ISIS. Similarly, Neo-Confederate white supremacists burned Jesse Washington alive to the perverse delight of an adorning crowd of spectators watching and celebrating. Same methods. Same extremism.

Therefore, I would hope that members of the public who are invited to speak at your hearings would refrain from using such incendiary labels to describe people who don't agree with their point of view. The Neo-Confederate side should be more respectful of other people's opinions.

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1. Public Feedback for Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Confederate Memorials and Street Names

1. Please provide your feedback:

The following item moved today on the Associated Press, which should be given credit if some or all of the article is reproduced. It speaks to ways in which various communities in Southern states are handling situations similar to the one before the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Confederate Memorials and Street Names.

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BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (AP) — Growing up in the 1950s, William Bell had to enter Birmingham's segregated Lyric Theatre through a side entrance, marked "COLORED," that was walled-off from the elegant lobby. He climbed a dimly lit stairwell to watch movies from the steep balcony where black patrons had to sit for generations.

Now the mayor of Birmingham, Bell recalls the Lyric's beauty, but also the way it isolated black people.

The inequity built into The Lyric Theatre's very architecture is a painful reminder of the city's ugly past as one of the most segregated places in America. But it also serves as a living history lesson, a symbol of how the Deep South has changed since the courts ended discriminatory Jim Crow laws.

Preservationists had to decide whether to keep reminders of The Lyric's discarded color line before they unveiled an \$11 million restoration of the 102-year-old theater, which had been closed for decades. In this case, they chose to highlight the history, installing a glass door etched with the words "Historic Colored Entrance" in the lobby wall, so that patrons can peer into the past.

Across the South, people are struggling with similar questions: What does a changing region do with the vestiges of back-alley service windows, segregated waiting rooms, dual water fountains and abandoned schools that once formed the skeleton of a society built on oppression?

Northern states have such reminders, too. A black heritage trail in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, includes all-black burial grounds and a plaque explaining that blacks had to sit in designated pews in New England churches through the mid-1800s. In Detroit, murals decorate a 6-foot-tall concrete wall built in 1941 to separate a new development meant for whites from an existing black neighborhood.

But the issue has become particularly acute in the South, where millions still remember living through segregation. More so than in the past, many older people and younger generations feel a need now to discuss the legacy of Jim Crow, said Robert Weyeneth, a University of South Carolina history professor who specializes in preservation.

"It has become more complicated today because people are more willing to think about the preservation of the architecture of white supremacy," Weyeneth said. "Initially, no one wanted to save these things."

It makes some people uncomfortable to be reminded of segregation at the Lyric, but the mayor believes people must see history as it really was, even if that means glancing up at the segregated balcony where he sat as a young boy. The ornate theater was beautiful, he recalls, but blacks up there could never mingle with the white patrons far below.

"The best seats were on the front row of the balcony because you could flick popcorn or peanuts down and

it would land in their hair," said Bell, now 66, grinning at the memory.

"We should not shield ourselves from our past," he added.

Some other places where communities have had to come to terms with the physical reminders of segregation:

OAKLAND CEMETERY - ATLANTA

Atlanta's Oakland Cemetery, with 70,000 graves dating to 1850, shows that segregation was meant to last eternally in the Jim Crow South, and operators don't shy away from its history.

The city-owned cemetery was divided by race for generations until the City Council ended the practice in 1963. Today, some black people are buried in previously all-white sections, including Atlanta's first black mayor, Maynard Jackson, who died in 2003 and lies in an ivy-covered grave.

Explaining this segregated past is part of the educational mission at Oakland, said executive director David Moore. A brochure, guided tours and audio exhibits explain the cemetery's black section, which holds about 12,000 graves, and signs denote the black section, a Jewish section and a mixed-race "Potter's Field" for indigent burials.

A recent visitor complained that the story of slave burials and segregation was "sad" and shouldn't be discussed. Moore disagrees.

"Cemeteries provide a great place for people to look and try to figure out what happened before," he said.

MONTPELIER TRAIN DEPOT - ORANGE, VIRGINIA

Built in 1910 when laws prevented whites and blacks from mingling in many public spaces across the South, the Montpelier Train Depot at Orange, Virginia, was constructed with separate waiting rooms for whites and blacks. Preservationists at President James Madison's Montpelier estate, where the white-and-yellow depot is located, decided to keep the rooms as they were during a 2010 renovation.

The depot remains an active U.S. Post Office, and some favored taking down the "WHITE" and "COLORED" signs that hang over the waiting room entrances. Instead, the depot has been equipped with exhibits that explain the legal history of "separate but equal" laws and their effects on black residents during the Jim Crow era.

JONES COUNTY COURTHOUSE - ELLISVILLE, MISSISSIPPI

The metal plaques attached to two concrete water fountains outside the Jones County Courthouse in Ellisville, Mississippi, hide an ugly truth: one fountain was exclusively for whites and the other for blacks.

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People sought the removal of the dual fountains in 1989, calling them a painful reminder of segregation, but the white-controlled board of supervisors refused. Instead, officials plastered over the "COLORED" and "WHITE" inscriptions, which reappeared once rain washed away the plaster.

County leaders then decided to cover the old racial inscriptions with plaques denoting the year the

courthouse was built, 1908. Today, the twin water fountains still flank the courthouse stairs. Nearby on the lawn stands a monument to Confederate veterans.

BUTLER BEACH - ST. AUGUSTINE, FLORIDA

There's little to let visitors know that Frank B. Butler County Park was once a thriving resort for blacks located just south of segregated St. Augustine Beach, Florida.

The park's website tells the story of Butler, a black businessman who saw the opportunity for a black beach in the segregated South during the first half of the 1900s. The Atlantic Coast resort he created grew to include bathhouses, a casino, pavilions, a motel and other amenities for blacks who weren't allowed at white-only beaches in the South.

Those structures disappeared generations ago, and black historian Bernadette Reeves laments the lack of markers at the site on scenic A1A to explain its significance.

"Can you imagine that the whole Atlantic Ocean wasn't big enough for whites and blacks to swim together?" she said.

ROSENWALD SCHOOLS - REGIONWIDE

Philanthropist Julius Rosenwald spurred the construction of more than 5,300 schools for blacks across the South over a two-decade period ending in 1932. Efforts to save the buildings are spotty.

Rosenwald built the schools at the urging of black leader and educator Booker T. Washington, who founded Tuskegee University in rural east Alabama and had a firsthand view of the inherent inequality of "separate but equal" schools for blacks and whites. Rosenwald's schools bridged a gap that white-controlled governments wouldn't fill.

Today, some communities and groups have embraced the preservation of Rosenwald schools, typically wood-frame structures built along rural roads. The National Trust for Historic Preservation estimates that fewer than 450 survive today.

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1. Public Feedback for Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Confederate Memorials and Street Names

1. Please provide your feedback:

Ad Hoc Advisory Group
City of Alexandria, Virginia

Dear Ad Hoc Advisory Group:

I wish to express an opinion about the proposal to rename some streets and remove Confederate memorials in the city of Alexandria, Virginia.

I am sure every morning when a battered woman, a hungry child, a homeless person, a jobless person, and any other disenfranchised person in this city, be they black, white, yellow or red, arises, their first action is to wring their hands in distress over the street names and Confederate memorials this committee has deemed offensive. Their next action is to find safety, to find a meal, to find shelter, or to find a job, all the while lamenting the fact that certain street names and Confederate memorials recall a terrible time in the history of this great country. Throughout the day, the week, the year, I am sure their conversations deal with nothing but these street names and the presence of these memorials. Get a legitimate issue to investigate. History is history. Removing a street name or a Confederate memorial which has been in place for over a century, in some cases, can not change history, nor can it ever change history, nor can it ever erase history. More importantly, though, changing the street name or removing a memorial does nothing to improve the quality of life for the citizens of Alexandria. It is window-dressing.

The committee has provided copies of estimated costs for removing and installing existing offensive street signs. Who will perform the job? City employees? State employees if a sign is on a state-maintained road? Will over-time costs be incurred for installation of new signs? What cost is paid to the state for their services? Furthermore, there is no estimated cost for the removal of the memorials. Who performs that work and at what cost? If a private contractor is secured, how much time and money is involved in electing that contractor? What are projected over-run costs for this entire project? Nothing is mentioned. From where in the city budget will this money come to pay for the project? If there is not enough surplus money in the budget to cover costs, how will the city pay the bill? Reduce expenditures of existing city services? Cut or suspend city services? Raise property taxes? Increase the fiscal budget for 2017? Multiple hidden costs exist, as with any project; however, these costs are not mentioned or addressed in existing paperwork. Moreover, moving forward with this proposal does not benefit ALL citizens of Alexandria; it does not improve living conditions; it does not provide meals for hungry people; it does not help renovate dilapidated sections of the city.

Base cost of this proposal is over two hundred thousand dollars, as indicated by paperwork. Additional costs will more than likely be another two hundred thousand dollars, bringing the grand total cost of this project to nearly a half million dollars. For what: the removal of metal and stone? Are there not more pressing and important priorities to address that will enrich the lives of every citizen in Alexandria? Ask the battered woman, the hungry child, the homeless person, the jobless person, those families living in the dilapidated sections of the city.

This Ad Hoc Advisory Group has been given the responsibility to serve every citizen living in Alexandria. Do the job for which you were appointed.

Tamara Heird

Annapolis, Md.

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Feb 11, 2016 09:38:15 Success: Email Sent to: craig.fifer@alexandriava.gov

1. Public Feedback for Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Confederate Memorials and Street Names

1. Please provide your feedback:

FOR THE COMMITTEE:

I do not live in your city but have stayed there while working on Capitol Hill for over thirty years. I am a direct descendant of the Fowle Family, my great grandfather in addition to serving on your city council, also later in the state legislature, was a Captain in the 17th Virginia Infantry, Co H, and contributed to the Monument that you are discussing. His father, William H. Fowle was a Major in the Commissary Department of the Army of Northern Virginia, prior to the start of the war, he spoke throughout the city opposing secession. But joined with the men from Alexandria during the war and followed his state. The warehouses he built are still in use in the city. He along with his father, secured the piping of gas and water to the city. He also contributed to the land for the construction of the Lyceum. His father, William Fowle, married Eliza Thacker Hooe and through her, I am related to the first Mayor of Alexandria. They owned the homes at 711 and 811 Prince St.

As a college student, I joined the civil rights movement and almost 100 years later than my ancestor's civil war service, I was arrested first in Tennessee for bringing clothes to sharecroppers who had been evicted for registering to vote, later in Mississippi for sitting in at a lunch counter. Though this was to my advantage as there I met the mother of my children.

In my business and professional career, I worked in the civil rights movement, was responsible for the integration of the staff at the southern YMCA conference facility, was Director of the Jacksonville FL Community Relations Commission during the time of civil unrest, wrote the first city affirmative action plan, was Director of the City Department of Housing and Urban Development leading toward demolition of substandard public housing and scattered site public housing throughout the city, later managed the PGA TOUR minority intern program and was involved in the startup of the First Tee.

I have an understanding of what I believe to be your mission as well as an understanding of the place that Alexandria has in the history of this country.

First, as to the monument to the 17th Virginia that has been standing for almost 140 years at Prince and Washington. And to which my great grandfather contributed.

To borrow from David Cole, Professor of Law at Georgetown, removing that monument or relocating it is a side show. It does little to advance the cause of racial justice, with which we all agree. It substitutes cheap symbolism for concrete measures to achieve real progress. If symbolism is the issue, it is better to commission new monuments, and to use new naming opportunities to express a measure of inclusion, then an attempt to airbrush what some might perceive as disturbing facts about the past.

Does this lead to the renaming of Washington because he kept slaves? Should the FDR memorial be renamed for his interning of over 100,000 Japanese Americans.

As for flags, history tells us that until the middle of the 20th century, the Confederate Battle Flag was not the symbol of the Klan and related groups, rather the United States Flag was their symbol and newsreel's capture it in their grand march early in the century through Washington. However, sadly, good people in the south did not speak up and allowed the Battle flag to be viewed as a symbol of racial oppression. I agree with Joe Riley, former Mayor of Charleston, and for now it belongs in a museum until such a time as it is no longer viewed as such a negative symbol.

Street names honored citizens or people to whom at the time of naming were important to the citizens of the city. At this point, renaming them again would be only symbolism and not advance the cause of racial justice.

Alexandria has a long rich history, and many of the people whose memory or symbolism you seek to remove, like people today, were a mixture of good and bad as viewed from our perspective in the 21st century. Better to work on presenting it all, and providing an explanation than seeking to remove from public view the symbols of that history.

What was a cliché is now an axiom, unless we remember the past, we are probably going to repeat the mistakes of the past. Alexandria is a wonderful place for the memory of history of all periods of our country as well as colonial times. It can be a value to our entire country, but it needs to keep the vestiges of all eras of its existence.

Your service is important and I am sure you want to represent the entire city. While I do not live in Alexandria, the roots of my mother's family will always be there, and the Fowle family played a significant role in development of what is now such a wonderful place to live.

Thank you for giving me this opportunity to express my views.

Sincerely,

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1. Public Feedback for Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Confederate Memorials and Street Names

1. Please provide your feedback:

My name is Timothy Conway. My family has resided for five generations in Alexandria, and we have resided for twelve generations on a family farm in Madison County, Virginia, on land which is a part of our original 1640 land grant. It is the land of Eleanor Nellie Conway's family, and she was the mother of James Madison. My grandfather was a son of a Confederate soldier, and was a participant in the dedication of the Marshall House plaque on King Street in 1976. My grandmother was one of the caretakers of the Appomattox statue on Prince Street. I have lived my entire life in Virginia, and retired from a supervisor's job at the FBI after 30 years of service. These things and a dollar will buy me a cup of coffee; I am stating all of this to illustrate that my family and I have deep ties to both Alexandria and Virginia and this area's history.

What you are engaging in is the equivalent of cultural cleansing. Cultural cleansing is wrong, because it is wrong to judge my ancestors on the basis of modern and ever-changing morality. By this standard, in time historical icons like Washington, Jefferson, and Madison will also be dismantled, because they held slaves, or, perhaps, because they were rigidly entrenched in America's patriarchy, against which modern charges like sexism and homophobia can be easily made. What statues, erected in our own times, will we be pulling down a century from now, because they also fail some moral litmus test? The Kennedy brothers (Jack, Teddy, etc.), if you examine history closely, can easily be designated as devoted sexists, womanizers, and homophobes, by today's standards. Should we begin toppling their statues now?

The Civil War had many causes, and to the extent that slavery was a central issue, slavery was legal preceding the war in states throughout the United States. Most of my ancestors and their neighbors were Piedmont farmers who did not own slaves, and it is estimated as many as 85 percent of Confederate soldiers' families were not slaveholders. These men and women fought bravely to defend their homelands from what they perceived to be a centralizing and aggressive federal government's authority. It is estimated that, in addition to the 600,000 soldiers who died on both sides in the Civil War, a further 700,000 civilians died as a result of disease, starvation, violence and financial ruin. Some of these collateral deaths were my family members, and almost all of the deaths were in the South, where most of the battles of the Civil War occurred.

Both my immediate and remote ancestors were honorable people whose integrity, sacrifice and bravery do not deserve to be dishonored and purged. I ask you, as their descendant, to stop this campaign of cultural cleansing.

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1. Public Feedback for Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Confederate Memorials and Street Names

1. Please provide your feedback:

Interesting and little known fact about Confederate history written by a native Alexandrian.

UNSUNG SOLDIERS: BLACK CONFEDERATES

March 1, 2016 by oldtowncrier [Leave a Comment](#)

By Doug Coleman

UNSUNG SOLDIERS: BLACK CONFEDERATES

Civil Discourse 1 (1) In 1831, a black preacher named Nat Turner led a slave revolt in Southampton County, resulting in the massacre of perhaps 65 whites, including women and children. The rebellion broke upon the rock of Dr. Blunt's plantation. Blunt's slaves, armed with muskets and standing shoulder to shoulder with the resident whites, scattered the rebels and the revolt fizzled. Why would Blunt's slaves fight Turner rather than join him? Was it Stockholm syndrome or did Blunt's slaves feel they were protecting their own home and "family", black and white.

Fast forward thirty years to 1861. When the North invaded the South, the population of the South was a little over 9 million – of which about 5 million were white, the remainder being free blacks or slaves, versus about 35 million northerners. These numbers alone tell a story – it is impossible to believe that a population outnumbered almost four to one in a total war could survive four years without the dedication of the entire population; conversely if almost half of the population decided to go full Nat Turner, actively sabotage or just shirk work, it is inconceivable that the Confederacy could have lasted any amount of time at all. Further, while hundreds of thousands left or were confiscated when Yankee armies swept through, many stayed on. The South was not devoid of its former slaves when the war ended.

Millions of southern blacks supported the Confederate war effort because the Confederacy was their country. When Sherman made "Georgia howl", he left a desert for everyone. The blockade affected everyone. When the Yankees carried off the livestock and corn and burnt people out, it was not just white people who starved and froze. And if the Yankees carried you off as "contraband", you were now homeless.

We have movies like Glory which celebrate the African-American contribution to the Civil War but precious few which aim for the converse (Holt from Ride with the Devil is an exception, also a treat for fans of Tobey McGuire, Jewel and Jonathan Rhys Meyers). There is no question that blacks served the Confederacy. The real question is in what numbers and to what degree they did so willingly.

Frederick Douglass, writing in Douglass' Monthly in September 1861 notes:

It is now pretty well established, that there are at the present moment many colored men in the Confederate army doing duty not only as cooks, servants and laborers, but as real soldiers, having muskets on their shoulders, and bullets in their pockets, ready to shoot down loyal troops, and do all that soldiers may to destroy the Federal Government and build up that of the traitors and rebels. There were such soldiers at Manassas, and they are probably there still. There is a Negro in the army as well as in the fence, and our Government is likely to find it out before the war comes to an end. That the Negroes are numerous in the rebel army, and do for that army its heaviest work, is beyond question. They have been the chief laborers upon those temporary defences in which the rebels have been able to mow down our men. Negroes helped to build the batteries at Charleston. They relieve their gentlemanly and military masters from the stiffening drudgery of the camp, and devote them to the nimble and dexterous use of arms. Rising above

vulgar prejudice, the slaveholding rebel accepts the aid of the black man as readily as that of any other. If a bad cause can do this, why should a good cause be less wisely conducted?

Some enlisted enthusiastically, like the Louisiana Native Guards, made up mostly of free blacks and mixed race men of color from New Orleans. They formed their regiment in March of 1861, well before the shelling of Fort Sumter and the invasion of Virginia. In Louisiana, stupidity and racism trumped patriotism. The governor rejected the regiment and refused to arm them. So insulted, the regiment offered itself up for service the following year – this time to Benjamin "Beast" Butler after the capture of New Orleans. Butler was a little smarter than the governor of Louisiana and the Native Guards became the first colored regiment in the Union army, going on to distinguish themselves in the Vicksburg campaign. In Charleston, they were smarter – 150 free blacks volunteered their services and set to work constructing fortifications. And it is hard to account for the captured blacks who chose to live (and die) in Union prison camps when they could have secured their freedom by stepping forward and taking the Union oath of loyalty.

More may have served more reluctantly, as slaves either hired out by their masters or impressed by the government to construct forts and earthworks. Sarah Emma Edmonds, a woman who disguised herself as a man to serve in the Union army, painted herself with silver nitrate so that she might slip through the lines and spy masquerading as a male slave. Once inside the rebel camp, she and most of the other blacks were ordered to work on fortifications near Yorktown, backbreaking work for her. One night she was among a group sent out with supper for the men on the picket line. A sergeant handed her a rifle and directed her to take the place of a picket who had been wounded "which I was told to use freely in case I should see anything or anybody approaching from the enemy." Then the sergeant gave her a kick and reminded her that the penalty for sleeping on duty was death. She slipped back into her own lines that night. Edmond's account is corroborated by a sketch from Harper's Weekly from January 1863 depicting two Confederate pickets as seen through a telescope.

Civil Discourse 2 Similarly, a slave named John Parker from Fairfax County was directed by his master to assist with building fortifications in Winchester, Fredericksburg and Richmond. At First Manassas he found himself under fire manning a cannon with three other slaves. He was scared to death and wanted to run over to the Yankees. However, he appreciated that his officer would have had him shot down if he tried. Eventually he defected to Alexandria and served as a cook for the Yankees.

William Henry Johnson, a free black from Connecticut was present at Manassas. He corroborates Douglass' concerns and says black soldiers were a decisive factor: "We were defeated, routed and driven from the field. ... It was not alone the white man's victory, for it was won by slaves. Yes, the Confederates had three regiments of blacks in the field, and they maneuvered like veterans, and beat the Union men back. This is not guessing, but it is a fact." It is highly doubtful that the South had three regiments of blacks at First Manassas; were these laborers such as Parker who were pressed into service to meet the emergency? If so, how willingly did they fight? The problem is further complicated by defining who is "black" – mixed race individuals could be legally "black" to the degree of "octoroon" – one eighth black.

There is another story told by a Yankee officer observing an opposing battery through his telescope. Blacks were being tasked to load the guns, which entailed stepping into the embrasure of the earthwork, exposing them for a few seconds. Berdan's Sharpshooters, a special regiment of professional snipers, killed every one of them so exposed without pity, notwithstanding an appreciation that these men were almost certainly acting under coercion.

The irony of Confederate policy is that early on at least a portion of the free blacks and even of the enslaved would have supported the new government in the field, as in New Orleans and Charleston. A nation outnumbered almost four to one would be very foolhardy indeed to disqualify almost half of its population from service. But the Confederacy squandered this opportunity and the stories of black soldiers in the ranks trickle off after 1862, though some black soldiers were noted among captives at Gettysburg

Conversely, the Union appreciated the value of the slaves to the war effort and passed two Confiscation Acts and the Emancipation Proclamation to deny the Confederacy this resource. Freed slaves joined the Union army in droves – by the end of the war, Colored units made up about 10% of the Yankee army, while "contrabands" now performed the same services in Union camps as they had formerly. In contrast, most scholars believe that the proportion under arms was perhaps 1% of the Confederate army. In January of 1864, General Cleburne urged Richmond to let slaves serve in exchange for their freedom, without success. Lee made the same argument a year later, emphasizing that the notion was "not only expedient, but necessary." In March of 1865, the Confederate Congress finally relented. Too late – Lee surrendered the next month.

My dad has a book of photographs taken at a Confederate reunion circa 1900. It includes our own people, but in the very back (of course), there is a photo of a black veteran named Monroe Gooch. He served through the war and was present at the surrender. In the photo, he is wearing the Confederate uniform. He was a member of the veteran's organization, was welcome at the reunions and probably paid for his own hotel and train ticket. This guy wanted to be there to be counted forty years later. Make of that what you will.

Sources: Laura L. Gansler, The Mysterious Private Thompson; Robert P. Broadwater, America's Civil War: Louisiana Native Guards, <http://www.historynet.com/americas-civil-war-louisiana-native-guards.htm>; Black Confederates, <http://teachinghistory.org/history-content/ask-a-historian/24634>; John Stauffer, Yes, there Were Black Confederates, http://www.theroot.com/articles/history/2015/01/black_confederates_not_a_myth_here_s_why.3.html

Doug Coleman is an attorney and amateur historian in Alexandria; comments and corrections are welcome at dcoleman@coleman-lawyers.com.

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Mar 08, 2016 14:45:50 Success: Email Sent to: craig.fifer@alexandriava.gov

1. Public Feedback for Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Confederate Memorials and Street Names

1. Please provide your feedback:

At the Feb. 8, 2016, public hearing of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Confederate Memorials and Street Names, a speaker said that George Mason IV of Gunston Hall had decapitated four slaves and put their heads on display upon the chimneys of City Hall. The speaker did not indicate why this was done nor did he offer substantiation of this grisly claim which was out of character for the author of the Virginia Declaration of Rights and Virginia's first Constitution and who was the father of our nation's Bill of Rights. Mason was an Alexandrian whose contributions to human rights were further recognized in the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. With the assistance of a research librarian in the Special Collections section of the Queen St. Library who found some relevant facts in a letter of George Washington to his friend John Posey in the Founders section of archives.com, I learned that some of Mason's slaves were involved in a 1767 plot to poison overseers. The court found them guilty so they were sentenced to death on Dec. 31 of that year. This source did not indicate how many slaves were involved. Their heads were displayed on the chimneys of the courthouse. In accordance with a 1745 law, the Virginia legislature awarded Mason a sum in recompense for the loss of his property.

It is important to clarify the record to clear the slur on Mason's good name and to establish that a mistaken impression circulating in some circles in this city is incorrect.

It is not clear why the speaker's criticism of George Washington's close friend Mason was relevant to the business of the Ad Hoc Group on Confederate memorials and street names. However, I noted at the end of the Feb. 8 meeting, a number of people in the back of the room who had not addressed the Ad Hoc Group complained that the city had done a poor job of presenting Black history and that problem needed correction. All of us need to be careful to present our history correctly, especially regarding little-known facts.

2. Please provide any contact information you would like the Advisory Group to receive. All fields are optional.

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Mar 08, 2016 16:14:39 Success: Email Sent to: craig.fifer@alexandriava.gov

1. Public Feedback for Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Confederate Memorials and Street Names

1. Please provide your feedback:

Feedback/statement sent as an attachment to Craig Fifer at craigfifer@alexandriava.gov on March 9, 2016.

2. Please provide any contact information you would like the Advisory Group to receive. All fields are optional.

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Mar 09, 2016 15:22:29 Success: Email Sent to: craig.fifer@alexandriava.gov

1. Public Feedback for Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Confederate Memorials and Street Names

1. Please provide your feedback:

While, I live in Fairfax County just south of Alexandria, I lived in the city for many years and visit several times a week. So I wanted to share my feedback:

Rt one should be renamed. A logical choice would be to Richmond Highway so it is consistent with Fairfax County. But anything other than Jefferson Davis would suffice.

The Flag should No longer be flown during confederate holidays

The Appomattox statue should remain. It does not glorify the war, the cause or any particular confederate officer. It just remembers the conflict and is a piece of history. Not only does it not glorify anything, when I look at it, I see the face of a defeated confederate soldier. It simply remembers the conflict.

The streets throughout the city that are named after confederate generals or military leaders should be examined on a case by case basis and, probably, some should be retained and some removed.

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Mar 16, 2016 11:02:20 Success: Email Sent to: craig.fifer@alexandriava.gov

1. Public Feedback for Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Confederate Memorials and Street Names

1. Please provide your feedback:

Hi there - I am an Alexandria resident and wish to voice my support for removing some of the most egregious cases of pro-confederacy in our city. I understand that the cost of removing all mentions of the Confederacy would be too high, but there are a few high-profile and especially problematic honors that should be removed, namely the Appomattox statue and Jefferson Davis highway. Honoring these men is an affront to the Alexandria of today and does not send the message of openness and tolerance that we should be conveying to all our residents. Simply put, this isn't about history, it's about today and keeping these names and the statue is honoring those who don't deserve it. We need to be proactive, especially when racism and xenophobia is ever more present in our political landscape. We are better than that! Thank you for your consideration.

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Mar 16, 2016 11:05:06 Success: Email Sent to: craig.fifer@alexandriava.gov

1. Public Feedback for Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Confederate Memorials and Street Names

1. Please provide your feedback:

Does England fly the flag of Germany or Japan, on government grounds, to honor them losing a war? If you want to fly it on private land, that's your business. You do not honor a traitor.

Streets named after Confederates are less an honor than something we have all gotten used to. Most people don't have a clue about obscure names. Almost all of the military bases in the South are named after Confederate generals, chiefly for Southern soldiers, to gain their allegiance, to the US Army. Ft. Polk, Ft. Benning, Ft. Bragg, Ft. Gordon, Ft. A P Hill, Ft. Pickett, Ft. Hood, Ft. Rucker, they will keep their names, to soothe that Southern soldiers. Our dysfunctional Congress would not permit those names to be changed, though they could have two names. Still there is no honor in naming anything that belongs to or is used by the general public, to be named to honor traitors, who lost the war.

As a retiree, I have considered a place to retire, my choices had been Virginia, South Carolina, Pennsylvania and Alabama, where we still own some land. Right now, despite the colder weather, on old bones, Pennsylvania is winning. At least, I know I won't have to walk into city hall, under the flag of insurgents, who fought to keep my ancestors, as slaves and decades later still insult their memory and mock my children with a traitors' symbol.

2. Please provide any contact information you would like the Advisory Group to receive. All fields are optional.

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Mar 16, 2016 11:41:52 Success: Email Sent to: craig.fifer@alexandriava.gov

1. Public Feedback for Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Confederate Memorials and Street Names

1. Please provide your feedback:

I strongly support initiatives throughout the US to change the names of streets that memorialize Confederate military and political leaders. These street names were, at some point, intentionally changed in order to memorialize them - so certainly we can change them back to their original names, yes? Doing so will honor Alexandria's pre-Civil War history.

In particular, I encourage the City of Alexandria - and Arlington County, also - to change the name of Jefferson Davis Highway. Of all the streets named for Confederate leaders, this is one of the most prominent (along with Lee Highway). It is an anachronism - and an embarrassment to our region.

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Mar 16, 2016 13:22:05 Success: Email Sent to: craig.fifer@alexandriava.gov

1. Public Feedback for Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Confederate Memorials and Street Names

1. Please provide your feedback:

.

Please finally relegate Confederacy ANYTHING to history books and museums where they are clearly identified as

-- traitors

-- believed in second-class citizenship, clearly un-American

-- losers.

Rename all public facilities after whatever we-the-people democratically find legal, inspirational, definitive of our best qualities and hopes and dreams,

... and set auto-renew time-periods for subsequent review to ensure our choices today do not superimpose more historical myopia on subsequent generations.

.

2. Please provide any contact information you would like the Advisory Group to receive. All fields are optional.

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Mar 16, 2016 13:35:12 Success: Email Sent to: craig.fifer@alexandriava.gov

1. Public Feedback for Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Confederate Memorials and Street Names

1. Please provide your feedback:

In May 2015, I started an online petition to rename Jefferson Davis Memorial Highway in Virginia. While watch the video recording of the last meeting, I heard several members of the Confederate Advisory Group at the February meeting express concern that they are only hearing from the neo-Confederate, pro-monument side at their meetings.

I updated my petition this morning (see <https://www.change.org/p/terry-mcauliffe-virginia-general-assembly-commonwealth-transportation-board-stop-memorializing-a-slave-owner-and-white-supremacist-rename-jefferson-davis-highway>) with a call to action asking over 4,000 signers of the petition to either attend the March 28th meeting or submit public comments on the online feedback form on Alexandria.gov.

I would appreciate it if you could forward this message to the seven individual members of the advisory group to let them know that an outreach effort has been made to provide the Advisory Board with a greater diversity of opinions on the Confederate street name and monuments issue. Unfortunately, I will not be able to attend the March meeting due to a pre-arranged overseas trip. I did not know about the scheduling of the first two meetings but I will likely attend the meeting scheduled in April.

Kind Regards,

Daniel R. Zim, Esq.
202-679-3733(m)

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Mar 16, 2016 13:46:59 Success: Email Sent to: craig.fifer@alexandriava.gov

1. Public Feedback for Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Confederate Memorials and Street Names

1. Please provide your feedback:

Streets named for military officers who betrayed their oaths to defend the United States have no place in modern society. Those who fought to preserve slavery do not merit the celebration of their evil deeds. It's high time all such streets be renamed to celebrate the many good citizens who have served our city and country in the many decades since the end of the Civil War. Monuments to traitors who killed in the name of slavery should also be removed.

2. Please provide any contact information you would like the Advisory Group to receive. All fields are optional.

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Mar 16, 2016 13:54:47 Success: Email Sent to: craig.fifer@alexandriava.gov

1. Public Feedback for Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Confederate Memorials and Street Names

1. Please provide your feedback:

In 2016, we should not be celebrating the generals or leaders of a group of people that wanted to own other people. This just further contributes to the racist microaggressions and blatant disregard for the oppression of the black community in the region. Please change the names.

2. Please provide any contact information you would like the Advisory Group to receive. All fields are optional.

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Confirmation Email

Mar 17, 2016 07:27:23 Success: Email Sent to: craig.fifer@alexandriava.gov

1. Public Feedback for Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Confederate Memorials and Street Names

1. Please provide your feedback:

Dear Craig,

Because of the sentiment expressed at the Feb. 8 public hearing about Black history not being well and adequately presented by the city, I think it's useful to note how many city properties are devoted to Union/Black history and the costs to taxpayers of doing so. Therefore I have compiled a list; please add whatever you know and/or can find out to the mix.

I have noted what I already know to save your time. Wanda Dowell helped me with some facts.

Pls list all the African American sites, structures, monuments, statues, parks, cemeteries, etc. in the city. How much has the city spent to acquire and maintain them since they were acquired/built? Pls note dates of acquisition for all properties and their availability to the public.

I remember Mr. Thompson said on 2/8/16 that he had spent seven years of his life on the African American Heritage Park, the most beautiful in the city. It has a bronze tree sculpture, some lovely landscaping and structures as well as the graves. Costs of the land, improvements and annual maintenance?

For the Contrabands and Freedmen's Cemetery, include the costs of acquisition, cleanup of the site, archaeological work, the sculpture along with its competition expenses and prize, shipping, preparing its setting, etc.; the seeking out of descendants, invitations to them to come for a week of programs planned by city staff and culminating in the dedication, the costs of developing and implementing these activities; and ongoing maintenance.

The Alexandria National Cemetery has the graves of 3,500 Union soldiers, including US Colored Troops and four men who died chasing John Wilkes Booth. The City does not maintain the Alexandria National Cemetery; it is under the authority of the Federal National Cemeteries, like Arlington, except Alexandria is overseen by the Quantico Office. In February 1862, President Lincoln signed an order establishing 11 "Soldiers Grave Yards." One of those on the list was Alexandria because so many Union soldiers had already died and had been buried in that area.

How much did the city spend to acquire the property at Fort Ward, restore the fort, create the museum, acquire and restore the artifacts, and create the displays,? What have been its budgets from inception to now? (which includes employee salaries, programming, etc.)

Fort Ward, open 6 days/wk. with two full time and several part time employees, which holds Union army reenactments regularly; also has other events and uses volunteers

From Wanda Dowell: The City paid the owners that could be found - and in some cases their descendants - the value of the property in the 1950s. In most cases it was only lots. There were 39 different parcels and only where no owner could be found was it declared abandoned property and taken. The City Attorney had an intern work on it one summer to complete the consolidation. Bill Hurd said they paid owners what the land was worth at that time. The project at Fort Ward cost- if my memory is correct, was some \$500,000. The money came in part from the insurance money the City received when the Armory burned. Of course that only included the land, the restoration of the NW Bastion and the Museum Building. The additional park improvements and the ensuing 50 years of support is another matter. The acquisition of a portion of the Lord Collection was about \$15,000.

Pls provide the same information for the Black History Museum, starting with when it was the Black History Resource Center

Black History Museum open 5 days/wk. with a full time director; used to have Louis Hicks as Dir. and Audrey Davis as his assistant; he retired and she's director now.

Freedom House: I remember when Anne Stone couldn't sell it because it was newly discovered it had been the slave pen. I've forgotten the exact details, but I think the city acquired it (please provide the date) and then the Urban League started using it as their headquarters and museum. Does the city own it and rent it to the League, or was it sold to the League? What were the costs to the city to acquire, repair/renovate and maintain it?

The Freedom House Museum open 5 days/wk., the headquarters of the Northern Virginia Urban League, offers self-guided tours.

Alexandria Archaeology Museum, open six days/week, with a full-time employee and volunteers, and which has a diorama of the Jackson-Ellsworth confrontation at the Marshall House and a copy of the New York Tribune describing this incident. Cost of staff and maintenance of the space?

All costs associated with the Edmonson sisters statue, including maintenance

Black history month activities, including the poster contest established 20 years ago and associated annual receptions at City Hall

Nationally prominent speakers in our schools about Black history (I remember Jesse Jackson spoke at two assemblies while I was teaching at TCW)

The cost (paid by OHA) to develop the city's Civil War app which includes only Union/Black sites and no Confederate associated sites, not even the "can't miss it" statue at Washington and Prince Sts., the Lee Boyhood Home (has a state historic marker), the mass Confederate grave at Cameron & Washington Sts. (Christ Church yard), Christ Church's marked Lee pew, memorial tablet and silver marker on the communion rail; Ivy Hill Cemetery (where Emma Green and husband Frank Stringfellow are buried along with many other Confederate notables), etc.

Note: all the Confederate sites in the city have always been privately owned and maintained.

Any other support for Black history I may have missed.

Best wishes,
Ellen Tabb

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Mar 19, 2016 13:19:13 Success: Email Sent to: craig.fifer@alexandriava.gov

1. Public Feedback for Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Confederate Memorials and Street Names

1. Please provide your feedback:

As a general rule, I do not believe we should commemorate the Confederacy and its political and military leaders who attempted to destroy the United States of America in order to perpetuate and expand chattel slavery. Nevertheless, in making decisions on Confederate memorials, there are a number of individual factors that should be considered: 1) A person who is not a Virginian, e.g., Jefferson Davis, should under no circumstances be commemorated; 2) Confederate politicians or soldiers who were United States government or military personnel before 1861, and presumably took an oath of allegiance to the USA, should be considered traitors; 3) Memorials and street and school names that were adopted after Reconstruction and especially in the 20th century should be viewed not as commemorating historic persons and an historic event but rather as part of a culture of justifying and perpetuating racial segregation and second class citizenship of African Americans; 4) Virginians who worked for post Civil War racial reconciliation and the advancement of civil rights for African Americans should be honored even if they were Confederate soldiers or politicians.

The Confederacy, the persons who supported it politically and militarily, and the flags that represented it should definitely be remembered. However, the proper places to remember this historic event and these historic persons are museums, battlefields etc.; not public memorials, buildings and street names that were built or named in an attempt to rewrite history.

Finally, eliminating Confederate memorials, street names etc. in no way affects memorials to slave owners such as Washington and Jefferson and other Founders of the Republic which the Confederates tried to tear asunder. Slave owning was, unfortunately, sanctified by our Constitution; secession was not.

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Mar 21, 2016 10:06:05 Success: Email Sent to: craig.fifer@alexandriava.gov

1. Public Feedback for Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Confederate Memorials and Street Names

1. Please provide your feedback:

History books – and instructors - do not reliably tell the whole truth and nothing but the truth. For example, although our Massachusetts President John F. Kennedy's Thanksgiving Proclamations issued more than 50 years ago acknowledged Virginia's Berkeley Hundred Thanksgiving celebration of Dec. 4, 1619, American history texts and teachers still credit the Pilgrims' 1621 celebration as the first celebrated on these shores by the English-speaking people. Obviously, 1619 predates 1621, so why do the texts mostly written and edited in Boston and NY not credit Virginia's preeminence? and why should we care?

Note: I mentioned this point at the Feb. 8 hearing to alert you that what you've been taught about American history is wrong! even on this very clear point. I did not expect the Group members to know about the Berkeley Hundred celebration and am sorry if you were embarrassed by not knowing the answer to my question. I was pleasantly surprised that one of you did know about our VA event! My introductory question was a setup for the point that what history books portray and what we've always believed "true" is not necessarily so. To associate the Confederate cause with racism and hatred is a perversion abhorrent to Southerners and others who know their history. Those who do make that mistake, understandably, do not want the people who fought for such a cause honored. However, from a mistaken premise, a bad conclusion follows: that we should eradicate all traces of the Confederacy from our city.

Because our texts misrepresent an easily determinable fact like the first Thanksgiving celebration, how can we trust those same writers and editors to convey truthful and complete information about a complex subject like the reasons for one of our most divisive conflicts: The War Between the States? and not to demean Southerners and their history covertly if not overtly? Whence rose the propaganda that the racist and evil Southerners fought only to preserve slavery, and the noble cause for which the Northerners fought with God's blessing was to eradicate it? (Did God earlier bless their slaveship owners and their hugely profitable enterprise?) No exaggeration.

All the high school and college American history texts I have seen omit other important information, e.g., Southern states paid their costs for the Revolution when it ended, but Northern ones did not. Bailing out those debtor states was a paramount goal of Northern politicians like Alexander Hamilton who advocated a National Bank for that purpose, among others. He declared paying off a common debt would help unify the states. That stratagem meant the Southern states would also pay the debts of the Northern ones. Southerners protested in vain. Resentments for this and other reasons continued to fester.

Congress required Southern but not Northern states to pay tariffs that funded most expenses for the growing federal government and development and maintenance of Northern ports, lighthouses, roads, railroads, etc. Southern resentments increased. In general the agricultural South was wealthier than the North, which relied on hardscrabble farming, fishing and its most lucrative business, importing slaves from Africa who were sold in the North but more widely in the South. Northerners made impressive fortunes in the slave trade.

By 1860, 87% of the costs of the federal government were paid by four Southern states: Virginia, North and South Carolina, and Kentucky. After the first three seceded, Lincoln resolved to hold Kentucky at all costs and compel the seceded states back into the Union. He maneuvered to have Southern forces fire the first shot at Fort Sumter to justify his invasion. He said he had been elected President of all the states and intended to be so. There were other causes of the War, but money and power were key concerns for him. He did not mention abolishing slavery as a reason for his invasion; in fact, abolition was then an unpopular cause in the North.

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Mar 22, 2016 15:48:09 Success: Email Sent to: craig.fifer@alexandriava.gov

1. Public Feedback for Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Confederate Memorials and Street Names

1. Please provide your feedback:

March 26, 2016

To Alexandria Advisory Group on Confederate Memorials

Dear Members of the Advisory Group,

Please forgive the lateness of this letter on the issue of Confederate memorials in Alexandria. I hope I haven't missed the boat here and that you will have time to read this plea for understanding.

First, I think those who would advise on, or pronounce judgement upon, or pass ordinances concerning the history of Alexandria and its Confederate past must be transparent about their roots and backgrounds. During my lifetime, northern Virginia has seen a flood of non-Virginians, most from northeastern states, taking up residence in the Commonwealth and many now serving on its councils, governing boards, and in the General Assembly. It's important for all of us living here today to know that the history of Alexandria could be altered or erased by a small number of people (appointed or elected) who might have little connection, by blood or otherwise to the port city, and who might be influenced by certain biases or politically correct attitudes.

Second, in reading the public feedback last month, I saw many people and interest groups (some multiple times) citing litanies on the evils of slavery, segregation, and Jim Crow—facts, customs and beliefs that were the legal and social convention at the time, but which inflicted and perpetuated injustices that are repudiated today. Those evils are cited to demand the removal, not only of the ANV battle flag, but of all references and memorials to officers and soldiers of the Confederacy, including those who gave their lives in defense of their homes and State. These demands sound like the same cultural cleansing and artifact removal that Muslim extremists have inflicted today on the Middle East—purging from sight and memory ancient cultures and religions they dislike or find offensive. I also find it strange that local history and heritage groups have been excluded from the Advisory Group. In all candor, this strikes me as stacking the deck in order to achieve a predetermined outcome. I hope I'm mistaken.

Yes, Alexandria has a Southern history. It's an historical fact in our growth as a nation and part of what brings so many heritage tourists to Virginia and Alexandria—to reconnect with the names and places of their ancestors in that defining event, the War Between the States. As you well know, Alexandria's Confederate Dead were men of the militia companies of the city, most of whom became the nucleus of the 17th Virginia Infantry Regiment. Those Confederate Dead are memorialized on the Appomattox Monument at Prince and Washington Streets. As you also know, that monument was erected by the survivors in memory of their fallen comrades as was their duty and their right as American war veterans. The monument was erected at that particular intersection because that was the place where the troops formed to evacuate on the morning of the Federal invasion, May 24, 1861. The "Appomattox Monument" is protected by an Act of the Virginia General Assembly. Those who disparage it seem only interested in sowing division and resentment in order to achieve their goal of removing it. And that truly would be sad. That would be cultural cleansing by ideologues.

Take a close look at the statue. A defeated and unarmed Confederate soldier, head slightly bowed, arms crossed with hat in hand, gazes south. This monument could offend no one. It is an honorable memorial to those who did not return. It's part of our common history and heritage and that of the City of Alexandria. Enough with PC intolerance. Please see the link to the "Thin Gray Line: Confederate Veterans in the New

South," from VFW (Veterans of Foreign Wars) Magazine, copyright 2000: http://vaudc.org/confed_vets.html

As the above article explains, the Civil War destroyed the economies of the Southern States for generations. The wealth of the South was wiped out and probably a quarter or more of its fighting men were killed or maimed in defending against invading Union armies whose manpower pool was four times that of the Confederate States. Many today dismiss that slaughter as a "Lost Cause" excuse for defeat, but they cannot deny that Confederate soldiers made a tenacious defense of their States and way of life (however objectionable that might be now). Who among us today is so morally pure and self-righteous that they can judge and demonize the Southern people for vigorously defending their beliefs and their homes and States? If the shoe were on the other foot and the South's manpower vastly outnumbered the North's, would not the Union armies have fought just as bravely to defend their States and way of life from Southern invaders? It's all too easy to demonize the South whose armies time and again out-fought and out-maneuvered their Northern counterparts only to suffer sustained casualties that their smaller draft pool could not replace. Those are facts and the familiar canard that all Southerners fought to preserve slavery is just as false as saying that all Northerners fought to overthrow slavery. The reality as you surely know is far more complicated than that.

When I visit Alexandria today, I find African American historical sites, splendid museum exhibits, an African American Heritage Park, walking tours, brochures, and memorials, most of which are of recent origin but are finally and thankfully being embraced as a part of our collective history and heritage. These are welcome and long overdue—a compliment to education, understanding and cooperation in Alexandria. However, calls by some to remove Confederate and Civil War heritage and street names is dishonest and a refutation of that same collective heritage. We are what we are. Our history is what it is. Understanding and tolerance go both ways and must be on the table in all discussions about removing or changing the Confederate history of Alexandria. You cannot embrace and promote one facet of history while at the same time expunging another. That's nothing but hypocrisy.

I am aware that many transplants (and even some natives) are embarrassed by Virginia's Confederate history, but it's our history none the less and it cannot be denied, erased, or locked in a closet because some now think the history is unacceptable for public view. Alexandria was a staunchly Confederate city that was occupied by Federal forces throughout the war. Twenty-five years after the city's defeated soldiers returned home, they sought to remember those who made the ultimate sacrifice. We owe it to them to show respect for those who did their duty and lost all. The Appomattox Monument is a beautiful and honorable memorial to their sacrifice. It's an indelible part of the City of Alexandria and a timeless witness to the cost of war. The monument should stay exactly where it is.

Very Sincerely,

Edward T. Wenzel
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1. Public Feedback for Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Confederate Memorials and Street Names

1. Please provide your feedback:

The efforts of Confederate states to sustain slavery and enduring systems similar in nature were continuous during and after the civil war for decades (e.g., Reconstruction, Jim Crow laws, voting laws, intentional destruction of hundreds of black communities, prison system, flooding black communities with drugs, etc.). Unfortunately, several Caucasians still negate responsibility and liability as they seek to glorify critical aspects of American history at the expense of American Africans' suffering.

It is unconceivable the layers of trauma inflicted on American Africans as Caucasians historically and continuously create and implement a myriad of laws to control and even destroy people of color. Because trauma can be passed down to several generations through epigenetics as DNA is altered by environmental influences, its effects are still experienced. Therefore, the psychological impact of maintaining these signs is yet another way the mindset of Caucasian supremacy and American African inferiority is sustained.

This mindset impacts the self-esteem, self-worth, and identity development of both Caucasian and American Africans and sustains the divide between both groups as the following occurs:

- 1) The notion that it's acceptable to celebrate the intentional actions of harm to others in spite of the profound detriment caused
- 2.) Reinforcement of the belief that American Africans are not equal to Caucasian counterparts, but rather inferior, and that they do not have a voice regardless of their monumental contributions in building the Nation and ensuring its stability
- 3.) Validation of the continuation of such oppressive actions and macro/micro aggressions
- 4) Sustainment of a false reality about the Nation's history and a lack of awareness or intentional suppression of the unadulterated truth. Thereby, generating feelings of guilt, shame, entitlement, and inflated superiority within the Caucasian population
- 4.) Mental Health and biological health implications experienced disproportionately by American Africans (i.e., predisposition for anxiety, depression, etc.. due to the generational impact on the family, decades/centuries of health disparities, denial of/compromised opportunities, and ongoing macro/micro aggressions)

Janet Helms' White Racial Identity Model (1995) explains the process (in stages) that Caucasians typically matriculate through to achieve a lasting change in their mindset about themselves and full acceptance of people of color (visit attached link, <http://mss.boisestate.edu/tunnel-of-oppression/inside-the-tunnel/helms-white-racial-identity-development-model/>).

Which stages describes those of you fighting for these confederate signs and memorabilia? Are you willing to grow?

Recommendations:

Utilize this opportunity to model an example for the Nation by taking the initiative to rename these streets, particularly if you are dedicated to a Nation of true equality. Going beyond the acknowledgement of historic oppression to continuous efforts of healing and restitution.

Add to museums, monuments, and parks, the contribution of American Africans to the city/state throughout the state's entire history. Change the street names to celebrate leaders and citizens of various nationalities who proved monumental in changing the state's narrative in abolishing slavery and moving towards equality.

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1. Public Feedback for Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Confederate Memorials and Street Names

1. Please provide your feedback:

My name is Jeffrey Imm. I am a former resident of Alexandria and the Commonwealth of Virginia, who lived in Virginia for 15 years. I am contacting the Alexandria Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Confederate Memorials and Street Names on an issue of local and national security. As we all know, the Civil War has been over in America for over 150 years, and too many generations have carried the burden of the white supremacy legacy which was a fundamental part of the Confederate States of America (CSA). The ideology of white supremacy is a direct rejection of the values of the United States the concepts of equal liberty and justice that is an inherent part of our national American identity.

We are greater than this, and hundreds of thousands of Americans have died to defend such American values of equality. We owe those who have sacrificed their lives for this great nation the honor of carrying on their work and ensuring that we will fight to reject symbols and figures that denouncing such equal rights for all Americans. To some southern American, Jefferson Davis was an important historical figure. But he is a figure of the distant past, which has no place in the names and honors of the roads and highways our citizens must travel on.

The naming of Jefferson Davis Highway was an artificial effort by pro-Confederate lobbying individuals in the past. There is nothing "historic" about early 20th century lobbying efforts to rename some local roads with the name "Jefferson Davis Highway." But there should be something historic in Alexandria and Virginia's need to remove the name of white supremacist "Jefferson Davis" from this highway. That is a recognition of the history of the times we are living in today, not those of the 19th century. It is time for Alexandria, Virginia, and America, to move on. We should not even be debating the naming of a highway based on a white supremacist leader in the 21st century. We need to set an example of integrity for the generations ahead of us.

It is time to end this burden for the next generation and let our nation heal and move on with its destiny as a United States of America. The symbols of past white supremacy only continue to leave us divided and to inspire hatred, and even violence, as we have seen sadly too often, including the terrorist murders in Charleston, South Carolina, and across the nation. We have seen white supremacist calls for violence in Virginia, as well, and Alexandria has seen court cases of white supremacists seeking attacks on the U.S. government. Our nearby nation's capital has also been the target of such white supremacist violence, including the attack on the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum. We have seen yet another shooting at the U.S. Capitol today, March 28. We need to use every effort to remove the legitimization of the white supremacy ideology of hate and violence, as an inherent commitment to our local and national security. As we work together to defy hate, violence, and terrorism, Alexandria and the Commonwealth of Virginia must reject the ideology of white supremacy hate from the past, and refuse to continue to give such legitimization to such ideology in the future, and stand together as one nation, respecting both the history of achievement and vision of the future for the United States of America.

Jeffrey Imm

Responsible for Equality And Liberty (R.E.A.L.)

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